

Border Eagle

29 days until... *Air Amistad*
Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas

Vol. 53, No. 11 Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas March 18, 2005

AETC names public affairs award winners

Compiled from staff reports

Air Education and Training Command announced recently its public affairs annual achievement awards for 2005.

Laughlin received two unit awards and one individual award.

Capt. Paula Kurtz, 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office chief received the outstanding public affairs company grade officer award for units at the wing level and below.

The office also received the AETC Public Affairs Director's Excellence award for a small wing with a base population of less than 5,000 and the AETC Public Affairs Director's Excellence award among all wings for its internal information program. Columbus AFB and Vance AFB received second place in these categories respectively.

Individual awards for outstanding public affairs excellence are presented to well-rounded public affairs professionals with an impeccable record. First-place winners' packages will be forwarded to represent AETC in the upcoming Air Force competition.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Olufemi Owolabi

Ready, set...

Maj. Rex Calvert, 96th Flying Training Squadron, and other participants of the wing adventure race test run check their bikes during preparation. More than 15 Laughlin members participated in the "dry run" Wednesday to determine whether the course chosen for the wing adventure race is "good-to-go". Sign-ups for the adventure race, scheduled for April 23, are due to squadron points of contact today. The race consists of a 26-mile bike race, 3-mile relay race and rafting.

Newslines

Town hall meeting set

The 47th Medical Group commander, Col. Laura Torres-Reyes, will host a town hall meeting March 29 at 5 p.m. in the base theater. All Tricare beneficiaries are invited.

For more information on the meeting, call 1st Lt. Lauren Chavez at 298-6312.

Reserve recruiter visit

An Air Force Reserve Recruiter from Randolph Air Force Base, Master Sgt. Carroll Metheney, will visit Laughlin March 22 to brief members at 1:30 p.m. in the base education center, classroom 2. The briefing is open to all active duty and civilian personnel.

To attend or for more information, contact Tech. Sgt. Eric Maye at 298-5496.

Volunteer excellence award

Submission of packages for the volunteer excellence award for federal civilians, family members, and military or federal retirees is due March 25 to the Family Support Center building 246 room 301. Nomination packages must be prepared on a Air Force Form 1206. The guidance for the Air Force VEA can be found in AFI 36-3009, attachment 5. Military members are not eligible for this award.

For more information, call the Family Support Center at 298-5620.

Deployment stats

Deployed:	18
Returning in 30 days:	1
Deploying in 30 days:	1

Mission status

Mission capable rate (As of Tuesday)	
T-1, 88.9%	T-38A, 69.5%
T-6, 91.3%	T-38C, 76.3%

AETC names new command chief master sergeant

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE — Air Education and Training Command officials recently named Chief Master Sgt. Rodney Ellison as the command's new command chief master sergeant.

As the command's top enlisted Airman, Chief Ellison succeeds Chief Master Sgt. Karl Meyers who retired March 11.

The command chief master sergeant advises the AETC commander and senior staff on the morale, welfare and effective use of more than 34,000 enlisted Airmen at locations world-

wide, plus the more than 350,000 enlisted Airmen trained and educated in the command annually.

Chief Ellison previously served as the command chief master sergeant for Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

(Courtesy Air Education and Training Command public affairs)

Chief Master Sgt.
Rodney E. Ellison



Positive attitude improves productivity



Commander's Corner

Robert Wood
47th Flying Training Wing
Maintenance Directorate

We need positive attitudes; they keep us pro-active and productive. Two months ago, we had an Operational Readiness Inspection that gave everyone a chance to be on the receiving end of positive and negative attitudes.

Afterward, I knew that I had to send the right signal to my people, so I made a point of projecting a positive attitude to them by letting them know how much I personally appreciated all of their teamwork.

Today, we are moving on with our roles in mission support and responding to inspection findings with a positive attitude.

A lot of times when we say "He

or she has an attitude," we don't mean anything nice about the people we have in mind.

However, having an opinion of self-worth and how we regard our subordinates, peers, and superiors is a more accurate definition of attitude. The actions that we use to communicate our opinions become our attitude, which can be an okay thing to have.

Attitudes are a normal part of human experience.

Whether positive or negative, they have a profound effect on how we regard each other when we support the mission.

However, we want to accentuate the positive as much as possible. When we examine the mentors and role models who most inspired us, they were usually the people who acknowledged our humanity and offered feedback we could pass along to others.

When we did well, these people would come up to us and say or do things that made us feel like a million dollars. Even when we made

"However, having an opinion of self-worth and how we regard our subordinates, peers, and superiors is a more accurate definition of attitude. The actions that we use to communicate our opinions become our attitude, which can be an okay thing to have."

mistakes, these leaders would help us see the errors and build up our problem-solving so that we did not re-create the problem.

These were the people whom we aspired to remember and imitate because they were usually both successful and respected in life.

There are a lot of attitudes we can experience, internalize, and project, but only one that is really best for us all. Choose the right positive attitude.

Survivors of tragedies need support, not silence

By Col. Lela Holden
Office of the Air Force
Surgeon General

I am speaking for my friend. I am speaking for her because the pain and conflict surrounding her husband's suicide a number of months ago drags on her spirit and her voice. She has given me permission to speak for her.

First, let me provide some important details that offer context but hopefully do not violate her privacy. She is active-duty Air Force. Her husband was active duty but had left the service. They are both over 40. On the day he killed himself, he used the gun he insisted on having in the house. She does not believe he intended to kill himself the day he pulled the trigger in a fit of anger. Finally, she experienced his suicide within the context of the intense efforts on the part of the Air Force

to reduce suicides. Certainly there are few goals more worthy.

First, she went to extensive lengths to try to help him but ultimately could not prevent this tragic act. His problems had been many years in the making, and he sought medical help. There is surely some guilt in living with this tragedy, but to all those who subtly look askance at her and ask, "Couldn't you have done more?" the answer is "no."

Second, she needed then and needs now support and compassion, not pity.

But most of all, she needs more than silence. She has been astonished that so many who knew both of them have been unable to simply say: "I'm sorry for your loss." This condolence and compassion would have come if he had dropped dead of a heart attack. Her loss and grief are no less the way he died.

She lost her husband much sooner than she expected in the natural course of life. To acknowledge her loss and pain is the compassionate thing to do. She is astonished that so many say nothing.

So, to all of us who want to do the right thing related to suicide, to reach out to those at risk, let us not forget the ones left behind when these tragedies occur. Spouses, friends, supervisors, mental health professionals who did try to help, all who are left behind need to hear that ultimately they did not kill Joe, or Pete, or Mary. Joe or Pete or Mary killed him or herself.

And we need to reach out to those left behind and say something simple, sincere, and helpful: "I know this is a difficult time for you. I'm very sorry for your loss." There are many things we cannot do. That, we can do.

Border Eagle

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Deadlines

News for the Border Eagle should be submitted to the 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 338, Laughlin AFB, TX, 298-5262.

Copy deadline is close of business each Thursday the week prior to publication.

Submissions can be e-mailed to: olufemi.owolabi@laughlin.af.mil or sheila.johnston@laughlin.af.mil.

Advertising

Advertising should be submitted to the Del Rio News-Herald, 2205 Bedell, Del Rio, TX, 774-4611. Advertising should be submitted by 4 p.m. each Friday.

Knowing basics for buying home simplifies process

By Capt. Preston Young
47th Flying Training Wing
Legal Office

Since spring is near, so too is the permanent-change-of-station season for several military members and their families. The excitement of moving also brings on the anxiety associated with finding a new place to live, particularly for those looking to buy a home at the new duty station. Buying a house is often the most expensive purchase made by most consumers.

Once you become familiar with the basics of buying a home the process gets more simple. While real-estate laws vary by state, there are several steps in common no matter where you purchase.

For instance, the general rule under the law is that the buyer's real estate agent works for the seller. Therefore, even though a buyer's real-estate agent will assist you in choosing a home, the agent's loyalties remain with

the seller, since the agent's fee is a percentage of the selling price of the home. Whether or not you work with an agent, I strongly advise purchasers to talk to an attorney prior to signing any documents, starting with your agreement with the agent if that's what you decide.

When you find a home that meets all of your qualifications (i.e. budget, style, location, etc.), you must make an offer to the seller.

An offer will be the foundation for the contract for sale and typically includes a legal description of the property; purchase price and down payment amount; closing and possession dates; a statement expressing your expectation that the title to the property should be clear of any encumbrances (i.e., liens); the ability to cancel the contract in the event you can't secure a mortgage; and a description of items to be included in the sale (i.e. appliances, furniture, etc.).

Additionally, the offer should have an inspection clause which

allows you to cancel the contract in the event the house does not pass a professional inspection.

After an offer is made and accepted, the next order of business is to find a way to finance the purchase, which is usually accomplished by securing a mortgage from a bank. There are several types of mortgages available with varying terms and interest rates; so it pays to shop around for the best deal.

The more favorable terms are generally given to those with a good credit history, so I suggest that you conduct a credit check to correct any mistakes and clean up (or be prepared to justify) any blemishes in your record prior to investing in a home. Typically, you will be charged a loan application fee by the bank and will be required to pay 10 or 20 percent of the purchase price in cash.

Before closing on the home, usually the bank will require that a title search be conducted to ensure there are no claims, liens, charges or liability attached to the

property that the buyer has not been made aware of by the seller.

Your attorney should review the title insurance company's report to make sure you are not signing up for a disaster and advise you accordingly. In most cases it's worth obtaining title insurance for your own peace of mind, although you may want the advantages of doing so with your attorney as well.

Generally, at the closing, you and your attorney will review the deed, the bill of sale, and a sworn statement provided by the seller that there are no liens against the property.

You will also sign all mortgage papers and review the closing costs (i.e. survey fees, title charges, real-estate taxes, etc.). All the parties should be present to field any last-minute questions, but if the steps leading up to the closing have been accomplished accurately the closing is just about signing your name.

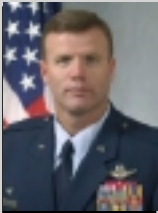
In many cases, you can move in on the same day.

Actionline

Col. Tod Wolters
47th Flying Training
Wing commander

Call 298-5351 or email
actionline@laughlin.af.mil

This column is one way to work through problems that haven't been solved through normal channels. By



including your name and phone number, you are assured of a timely personal reply. It's also useful if more information is needed to pursue your inquiry. We will make every attempt to ensure confidentiality when appropriate.

Before you call in or e-mail an Actionline, please try to work out the problem through the normal chain of command or directly with the base agency involved. Please keep e-mails brief.

If your question relates to the gen-

eral interest of the people of Laughlin, the question and answer may also be printed in the Border Eagle.

Thanks for your cooperation, and I look forward to reading some quality ideas and suggestions.

Below are some useful telephone numbers that may be helpful when working your issue with a base agency.

AAFES	298-3176
Finance	298-5204
Civil Engineer	298-5252
Civilian Personnel	298-5299

Clinic	298-6311
Commissary	298-5815
Dormitory manager	298-5213
EEO	298-5879
FWA hotline	298-4170
Housing	298-5904
Information line	298-5201
Legal	298-5172
MEO	298-5400
Military Personnel	298-5073
Public Affairs	298-5988
Security Forces	298-5900
Services	298-5810

Traffic at front gate

Question: I am calling about the possibility of a severe accident that is going to happen at the front gate if something isn't done.

It used to take me 15 minutes to get to work from my house. I could leave at 7 a.m. and be in around 7:15 or 7:20 a.m., no problem. But now, traffic is backed up a mile at 7 a.m. coming in the front gate. It seems like since we put civilian gate guards at the front gate, they have to inspect every car and it takes about 5 minutes to get cars through the gate.

There's no reason why you can

get in line before 7a.m. and have the traffic backed up almost a mile long trying to get in the front gate. That is totally ridiculous.

I don't like coming in the back gate because it's extra mileage on my part and extra gas. It's an extra 15 miles going in the back gate round trip.

So, we need to get something done. Thank you, sir.

Response: Security Forces understands that congestion at our main gate continues to cause frustration for many members of Team XL. Compounding this problem are individuals who insist on breaking the law and compromising safety of others, merely to

shorten their own travel time by a few minutes.

Our installation entry controllers (both military and contractor) have weighty responsibility as our first line of defense. They work diligently to facilitate safe, secure entry to Laughlin. In doing so, they must follow mandated 100 percent ID checks, large vehicle searches and random searches of smaller vehicles. They do this for the safety of us all.

We continue to focus on providing adequate personnel to check IDs and conduct required vehicle searches. To better accommodate traffic flow, we have increased the number of personnel posted at the main gate in the morning

hours. However, wait times will continue to vary because of fluctuating numbers of contractor vehicles, delivery trucks, etc., that require additional attention.

We will continue to monitor the situation and work to streamline access control at the main gate. We ask that all motorists operate their vehicles in a courteous, safe manner, and consider using the west gate, which is open from 6 to 9 a.m. and usually has much lighter traffic.

We appreciate your query and the continued involvement of Team XL to make Laughlin a safer place to live and work.

DFAS, myPay officials assure personal-data security

ARLINGTON, Va. — With “phishing” scams occurring more frequently, Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials said they want to assure customers that every precaution is taken to secure data.

Customers should be aware that the agency and its Web-based system, myPay, will not ask for personal or financial information by e-mail, DFAS officials said.

Individual DFAS customers can enter the myPay Web site with a personal identification number to access the secure financial page to make changes to personal information, officials said.

Phishing attacks trick people into passing personal information by luring them to false corporate Web sites or by

requesting personal information be sent in a return e-mail.

“Phishers” send e-mails or pop-up messages claiming to be from a business or organization individuals would routinely deal with — an Internet service provider, bank, online payment service or even a government agency, said Federal Trade Commission officials. The message usually tells people that they need to ‘update’ or ‘validate’ account information and might threaten dire consequence if they don’t respond.

People are directed to a Web site that mimics a legitimate organization’s site. The purpose of the bogus site is to trick them into divulging personal information so the scam operators can steal identities and make purchases or

commit crimes in the victim’s name, officials said.

DFAS officials offer the following tips to help avoid getting hooked by a phishing scam:

- Use anti-virus software and keep it up to date. Some phishing e-mails contain software that can harm computers or track activities on the Internet without the user’s knowledge.

- Do not email personal or financial information. E-mail is not a secure method of transmitting personal information. If people initiate a transaction and want to provide their personal or financial information through a Web site, look for indicators that the site is secure, such as an image of a lock or lock icon on the browser’s status bar

or a Web site address that begins with an “https.”

Unfortunately, no indicator is fool-proof; some phishers have forged security icons as well.

The myPay site combines strong encryption software and secure technology with the user’s Social Security number, PIN and secure Web address or DOD-specific telephone number.

These all act as safeguards against unauthorized access, officials said. This combination prevents information from being retrieved by outside sources while information is being transmitted. The secure technology provided to myPay customers meets or exceeds security standards in private industry.



Courtesy photo

Colorful winners...

(Left) Sarah Jackey and Abby Hernandez are the winners of the 2005 “Be My Valentine” coloring contest. Sarah, daughter of Capt. David Jackey, 86th Flying Training Squadron, won first place in the 6- to 10-year-old category. Abby, daughter of Master Sgt. Lisa Vargas-Hernandez, 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron, placed first in the 5-year-old and under category. The winners each receive a free pizza from Pepperoni’s here. The Book Mark Library held the coloring contest from Feb. 1 to 19.

Team XL welcomes 47th CES commander

In January, Team XL welcomed a new commander to the 47th Civil Engineer Squadron.

Lt. Col. Peter Bahm succeeded Lt. Col. Marc Pincince Jan. 4.

Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio.

Time in service: 18 years and a few months

Education: Bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Ohio University and a Master’s degree in Engineering management from the Air Force Institute of Technology

Previous assignments: Design engineer at Loring Air Force Base, Maine; Master’s student at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio; chief of operations at Wurtsmith AFB, Mich.; associate professor at the Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio; program manager at Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Ill.; operations flight commander at Pope AFB, North Carolina; chief, combat support branch (Aerospace Expeditionary Force Center), and chief, readiness programs and modernization (Air Combat Command), Langley AFB, Va.

Leadership philosophy: Hire and develop great people; point them in the right direction, and let them make it happen.

Personal hero: Ronald Reagan

Favorite quote: “We make it happen!”

— It’s been my quote about CE for quite a while



Colonel Bahm

Favorite movie: “Goldfinger”

Hobbies: Playing poker and computer games, and learning to use my Blackberry

Bad habit: I’m told I need to shorten my staff meetings...does that count?

What or who has inspired you most in life and why?: My parents. They came to this country in the post-World War II days to make a new life for themselves and their families. They succeeded not only to make a new life, but built a successful business. Essentially, they lived the American dream!

New program offers Airmen safe way home

Compiled from staff reports

With a movie playing in the background, a more-than-welcome knock on the door echoed in the almost empty Enlisted Heritage building.

"You threw me off when you said what building y'all were in. You guys must be pretty committed to be here this late," the pizza delivery guy said, dropping off the midnight dinner.

"Oh, it's still early for us," replied Staff Sgt. Benjamin Ackerman, 47th Contracting Squadron.

It was, after all, only two hours into a five-hour shift in a new program that helps make sure members of Team XL, regardless of rank, get home safe.

Sergeant Ackerman and other Airmen spent five hours of their time to make sure the same people who asked one another on Friday to "Have a good weekend," were able to return to work on Monday.

The Base Airmen Against Drunk Driving program is not just another enlisted performance report bullet to these Airmen, or something they can throw into a quarterly awards package. The lives of other Airmen, friends and family depend on them being there.

Members of the BAADD pro-

gram don't mind sacrificing a few hours of their week to make sure others return to base safely after a week-end of fun.

"I had to bury one of my best friends, Mark, when I was in high school because a guy was too drunk to know that it wasn't a deer crossing the street that he hit," said Sergeant Ackerman. "I had to say goodbye to someone I had literally known since pre-school because this guy had too much to drink and hit Mark as he was walking home from the store."

Each time you decide that you've "only had a couple" and you are okay to make it home, think of all the people you could affect. You may be able to see the road fine, but can you be sure that you can see that person crossing the street?

Can you look into someone's mother or spouse's eyes and tell them that you figured the safety of their loved-one wasn't worth the \$10 cab fare home, or swallowing your pride and calling your supervisor when you had a few too many?

Is your career or someone's life worth throwing away over dollar-long-necks-night at the club?

Every Friday and Saturday at 10 p.m. three Laughlin members turn on the lights on an otherwise dark, and

quiet Liberty Drive. Then, they drag the BAADD phone from the hallway into the classroom, turn on the cell phones, and wait. They wait for co-workers, fellow Laughlin members and more importantly, everyone, to make the right decision.

From 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. every Friday and Saturday, BAADD members provide base members with a way to do the right thing if they have been drinking.

Furthermore Sergeant Ackerman said, "We all need to relax and blow off some steam on the weekends; we just have to be responsible about it. You should always have a plan, whether it is a designated driver, calling a friend, or even walking home. But, getting behind the wheel even after one or two beers should never be the plan. If for some reason your plan fails, you don't feel comfortable calling your co-workers, or you find yourself without a safe way home, call BAADD.

"We won't ask any questions, or tell anyone about it, we just want you to get home safe. Our card game can wait, the movie can be paused, and the pizza can be warmed up," Sergeant Ackerman explained.

"Our commitment is to make sure all of our friends and family here get



home safe," he said.

Editor's note: The Base Airmen Against Drunk Driving program is open to all laughlin members, military and civilians, and run by all ranks, and offers free, no-questions-asked rides from anywhere in the Laughlin-Del Rio area and on the U.S. side of the Border Patrol gate to your home, either on or off base..

For more information on the program or to contact BAADD members, call 298-8234.

The hours of operation are 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Friday and Saturday, and hours are usually extended during three-day weekends and holidays.

Task force aims to prevent sexual assault with new policy

By Tech. Sgt. Vicki Johnson
314th Airlift Wing public affairs

LITTLE ROCK AIR FORCE BASE, Ark. — Everyone has a role in the prevention and responding to sexual assault, said the Joint Task Force on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response commander during her remarks at the Women's History luncheon here.

Brig. Gen. K.C. McClain assumed command in October 2004. The task force is establishing sexual assault policy for the Defense Department.

"(Sexual assault) is the most underreported crime in our society," she said. "We have to talk about it."

The eight-member, multi-service task force is striving to improve prevention efforts, enhance support to victims and increase system accountability, General McClain said.

The task force was formed as a result of a report released in April 2004 by the DoD's Task Force on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault. The report

called for the military to do more to help sexual assault victims. The Armed Forces reported a total of 901 alleged sexual assaults in 2002 and 1,012 in 2003.

"The Task Force is to establish overarching policy that would bring all services up to the same standard," General McClain said. "Now that the policy is in place, implementation is the next step. Implementation is the hard part — making sure that everybody understands the intent of the policy so that we ... tackle this issue and make it better."

"That is one of the reasons I was glad to come here," she said. "The more people that I talk to and help them understand what we are doing and why, will speed and ease the implementation."

Education is paramount for the success of this program, General McClain said. Everyone in the DoD, military and civilian, will receive initial training. It will be taught at basic military training, technical schools and first term Airmen centers. Training will be recurring, probably annually, General McClain said.

The policy is currently being written into officer and enlisted Professional Military Education programs, and will be taught at pre-command courses and the First Sergeant's Academy.

"Training must continue at all levels because as we progress throughout our careers our roles change," she said. "We must understand the issues so we can begin to eradicate this problem."

Sexual assault affects military readiness, General McClain said. The military is a team and for a team to be successful people have to rely on each other and they have to trust each other.

"Teammates don't discriminate against each other, they don't harass each other, they don't assault each other and they don't tolerate those who do," she said. "We all have a role in this to help keep our team strong."

Since 20 percent of the Air Force team is women, it is critical that the Air Force has a climate where everyone can trust each other, she said. Therefore, it should be dedicated to fixing anything that affects that climate.

Bush credits troops with terror war advances

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – American servicemembers are undertaking difficult missions in some of the most dangerous and desolate parts of the world in support of the war on terror, the commander in chief said March 8.

“These volunteers know the risk they face, and they know the cause they serve,” President Bush said during a speech at the National Defense University on Fort McNair, Wash.

“As one Marine sergeant put it,” the president said, “I never want my children to experience what we saw in New York, at the Pentagon

and in Pennsylvania.

““If I can eliminate whatever threat we can on foreign soil, I would rather do it there than have it come home to us.””

The cost of this dedication is high, Bush acknowledged.

“In this vital cause, some of our men and women in uniform have fallen. Some have returned home with terrible injuries,” he said. “And all who sacrifice will have the permanent gratitude of the United States of America.”

America’s military is serving “at a time of great consequence for the security of our nation,” the president said.

He called the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, “the culmination of decades of escalating

violence” that provided “a warning of future dangers.” These, he said, include terror networks aided by outlaw regimes, ideologies that incite murder, and weapons of mass destruction with the potential to kill millions.

Just as it did after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor six decades ago, the United States rallied after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 and has steadily moved against those that threaten it, Bush said.

“Like an earlier generation, America is answering new dangers with firm resolve,” the president said. “No matter how long it takes, no matter how difficult the task, we will fight the enemy and lift the shadow of fear and lead free nations to victory.”

5X7 Armed Forces

XLer, other servicemembers become U.S. citizens during ceremony at Bush Library

An XLer, Senior Airman Chae Pak, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron, and 46 other servicemembers took the oath of allegiance to become U.S. Citizens in a ceremony held at Bush Library, College Station, March 11.

Airman Pak, originally from South Korea, and who recently returned from a four-month deployment to Iraq, said becoming a citizen was one of the proudest moments of his life.

"I have the opportunity to be here and live a free life as opposed to others still in Korea who don't have the opportunity to live in America and be free," he said.

Also, he emphasized the opportunities he now has after gaining American citizenship.

"I feel it is necessary to be an American citizen so that I can feel wholesome and belong to one country, the same one I am fighting for," he said. "Also, I can now participate in voting, as well as re-enlisting in the Air Force."

His wife, Senior Airman Stephanie Pak, 47th Medical Support Squadron, said she is very proud of her husband for patiently enduring the long wait to become a citizen.

"I would like to thank my wife for being there for me when I needed her most and to share with me the wonderful opportunity of becoming a citizen," he said.

Furthermore, Airman Pak urges all citizenship candidates who are eligible to apply to do so on time. "I would strongly suggest anyone who does not have citizenship to apply. The process is fairly quick and it's worth going to the ceremony. It really meant a lot to me to retrieve my certificate from George Bush, a moment I will never forget," Airman Pak said.

Also, it's been a long time coming for U.S. Army Spc. Arafat Khaskheli. He was born in Saudi Arabia, but he is Pakistani, and he can finally say that he is truly an American.

"The feeling is really great, I've waited for this a long time," Specialist Khaskheli, 28, of Fort Hood, Texas, said as he and dozens more servicemembers took the oath of allegiance at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample

(Far left) Senior Airman Chae Pak, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron, and other Servicemembers raise their right hand while taking the oath of allegiance for U.S. citizenship at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, College Station, Texas, on March 11.

In all, 47 military personnel became citizens, the majority coming from nearby Fort Hood, in Killeen.

"Becoming a citizen today is going to open up a lot of doors for me, a lot of opportunities," Specialist Khaskheli said.

Nearby, Army Pfc. Ociel Dela-Sancha, 24, who came to the United States from Mexico, was also celebrating his new citizenship. "I've been in the country for 12 years, and it's great to be an American," he said.

Private Sancha, who recently returned from Iraq with the 4th Infantry Division, said he joined the military because he "wanted the best" for his family. With his wife, Araceli, holding their 2-month-old daughter, Arely, by his side, Sancha said now he is even prouder to be a soldier because he is an American.

Senior Airman Jose Gomez, 23, a native of Medellin, Colombia, could only smile about his new citizenship. He said there is irony in the fact that he joined the military to protect a country to which he did not belong.

"The way I see it, many citizens do not serve, while others do," he said. "I chose to serve, and this is my home.

My family and friends live here, and anybody that messes with my home (country), I have to defend it."

For those servicemembers getting their certificates of citizenship, the process was eased by an executive order signed by President George W. Bush on July 3, 2002. That order expedited the process for alien and noncitizen military members serving on or after Sept. 11, 2001, in the war on terror.

Other changes that made the process smoother included streamlining the application forms, many of which can now be completed online, and waiving the \$380 fee. In some cases, military members are exempt from some requirements.

For example, a servicemember only needs to serve one year of active duty to qualify for citizenship. Before this change, the requirement was three years.

During his keynote address, former President George H.W. Bush said he was taken aback by the ceremony at his library. He said that many people had been honored there, but this occasion was one of the finest.

Looking out at the servicemembers, he called out the names of some 20 na-

tions from which they hailed. Bush identified the group as a "United Nations of wonderful people" and said they had "earned the honor being bestowed upon them."

He said American servicemembers represent the "heartbeat of America," and that "duty, honor, country is not merely a slogan for the military but it is a ... creed of service by which they live their lives."

"Not only do these modern day patriots make us proud," Mr. Bush said, "they renew within our hearts the meaning of liberty."

Eduardo Aguirre Jr., director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the first to hold that position, told the servicemembers who had just become citizens, "I can indeed say that the future is bright."

He said that people are often surprised when he tells them there are more than 45,000 non-U.S. citizens in the armed forces.

"You and your families demonstrate with your service remarkable self-sacrifice for your adopted country," he said. "Even before you had secured for yourself the rights associated with American citizenship, you chose to defend our country and answer a call for a cause greater than self."

"I salute with reverence you and all of those in uniform who are willing to give the ultimate sacrifice to preserve freedom," Mr. Aguirre added.

He also pointed out that as part of a new initiative to award citizenship to servicemembers, immigration officials recently began holding naturalization ceremonies in war zones, including Afghanistan and Iraq.

Immigration officials say there are some 14,000 citizenship applications for immigrant servicemembers still pending. More than 2,000 servicemembers became U.S. citizens this year; 58 of those were awarded posthumously.

Since Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched in March 2003, about 12,000 military personnel have been sworn-in as new U.S. citizens.

(Extracted from article by Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample of American Forces Press Service)

States let taxpayers donate refunds to military families

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

Illinois led the charge last year when it began letting taxpayers check a box on their state tax returns to donate their tax refunds to families of deployed guardsmen and reservists.

Illinois’ example — which has paid out \$2.7 million so far to more than 5,000 military families — is quickly catching on nationwide. Nine other states now offer similar programs, and 21 more are pushing bills through their legislatures to set up their own programs, many with help from Illinois, according to Eric Schuller, senior policy advisor for Illinois Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn.

Illinois’ Military Family Relief Fund, established in 2003, provides \$500 grants to help families of the state’s lower-paid Guard and Reserve members cover expenses after their family member is called to active duty — often taking a big pay cut in the process, Schuller explained.

The program also provides grants up to \$2,000 for families in financial need due to a military deployment and

\$2,000 grants to troops injured or killed in combat or as a result of terrorist activity. So far, the state has paid out more than 100 of the casualty-based grants, Schuller said.

To qualify for grants under the Military Family Relief Fund, servicemembers must be in pay grades no higher than O-3 or W-3.

“This program is really well received by the Guard and Reserve,” Schuller said. “A lot of them are taking a huge cut in pay, and this is one way the state is showing its support and helping them out.”

Among those helped through the program was a Marine reservist who used his casualty-based grant to pay for his family’s travel to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, where he was being treated for serious burns, Schuller said.

In Michigan, Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm established the state’s Military Family Relief Fund in October. “There’s a tremendous need out there” for this program, Army National Guard 1st Lt. Evalynn Chapp said of Michigan’s fund. “Some of our soldiers

suffer rough times and need a little helping hand,” she said.

Another recipient of the Illinois Family Relief Fund, Marine Corps Reservist Sgt. Josh Horton, learned he had become the father of quintuplets as he was being treated for shrapnel wounds received during a mortar attack in Iraq. In addition to two grants from the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund, Horton received a tremendous outpouring of support from throughout the nation, including 25,000 diapers and a new, five-bedroom house.

In a Feb. 8 press event in Chicago, Horton joined the state’s lieutenant governor, who championed Illinois’ program, to encourage taxpayers to “check the box” and donate to the fund this income tax season to support other Guardsmen and Reservists.

“Our duty on the home front is to support the families of our citizen-soldiers as they are called to defend our freedoms,” Quinn said of the Military Family Relief Fund.

Last year, tax donations raised more than \$200,000 for the program,

and Schuller said he expects that number to increase this year. The fund also receives money through private donations and fundraisers ranging from lollipop sales to coloring contests. Schuller said some of the state’s municipalities have started sending out brochures about the program and details about how to contribute along with their water bills.

Quinn traveled to here last month to meet with other lieutenant governors and members of Congress to encourage every state to create its own Military Family Relief Fund. Schuller said those meetings stirred up strong interest and support.

Last year, the National Lieutenant Governor’s Association passed a resolution urging states to ensure that their reserve-component families are provided for during deployments.

“We cannot allow the citizens of our states who are serving their country to fall into financial ruin while they are in Iraq, facing harm ... while they are protecting us,” said Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante of California, whose state began its own Military Family Relief Fund in September.

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Lacks

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Thomas Mayo at
298-4355.**

Local Boy Scout looks to soar with ‘Eagles’

Young leader conducts service project, uses scouting experience to benefit community

**Story and photo
by Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill
Public Affairs**

Ryan Traster is about to reach the peak of a long journey -- one that started seven years ago when he became an active participant in the Cub Scouts and began learning the fundamentals of scouting.

Today, after years of perseverance and hard work, the 13-year-old is on the verge of attaining Eagle Scout, the Boy Scouts’ highest rank.

Traster, son of Tami and Col. Keith Traster, 47th Flying Training Wing vice commander, recently completed his community service project, which was a major requirement in order to apply for the rank.

After reaching Star rank last year, Ryan learned he and his family may be getting a new assignment this summer. So, he decided to go for the top rank before he departed.

“My scoutmaster’s been great, and I just wanted to get it done,” Ryan said. “And, I wanted him to be the one to award my Eagle Scout rank.”

Ryan recently pinned on Life Scout, the second highest rank, and now serves as a patrol leader, teaching younger members the fundamentals of scouting.

As he pursues Eagle, the requirements he must meet include being active in the troop and serving in a position of responsibility for at least six months as a Life Scout, earning 21 merit badges, taking part in a scoutmaster conference, and completing an Eagle Scout board of review. All requirements, except the board of review, must be completed before the candidate’s 18th birthday. The service project is considered the biggest and most challenging portion of all the requirements.

Ryan’s project consisted of renovating three gazebos used as observation posts on Laughlin’s nature trail, located on the northwestern edge of the base.

Although the rain wasn’t favor-



Ryan Traster works to complete the renovation of three observation posts on Laughlin’s nature trail. Traster, an Eagle Scout candidate, planned and directed the community service project.

able for an outdoor project that particular Saturday, March 5, the inclement weather didn’t put a damper on Ryan’s effort. Like a “true scout,” he, along with more than 30 volunteers, stepped up to the task and pressed on with the project.

The group put screens on the gazebos’ observation windows and neatly framed them with plywood. They also added hand rails to one of the gazebos and painted each of the large observation posts before the day ended. Volunteers also filled in and leveled off some of the trail’s sunken path. With a few minor details remaining, the Eagle Scout candidate said he would return later to put final touches on his project.

“Ryan planned, organized and directed the entire project,” said Jerry Garcia, Ryan’s scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 280. “This is the type of project that helps youth learn to make leadership decisions.”

The scoutmaster said in addition to honing his leadership skills, Ryan learned to coordinate with the local community and do something that benefited citizens of that community.

He reached out to the Laughlin community for volunteers, which included members from Del-Jen, the 47th Civil Engineer Squadron and the fire department, National Junior Honor Society members, and some of his fellow scouts. He was very appreciative for their assistance.

“I’m very happy about all the people who came out to help because I couldn’t have done it without the volunteers,” Ryan said.

He was also thankful for the local businesses and volunteers he coordinated with that provided lumber, paint, tools and equipment free of charge. Two local restaurants also provided free food for the group as they worked on the project.

“This was the largest project I’ve ever run, and I’m happy with it,” Ryan said. “It was difficult, but my scoutmaster, my dad and my mom were always there to help me when I had trouble or questions.”

Only two percent of all Boy Scouts make the Eagle Scout rank, which is a testament to Ryan and the attributes it takes to reach such an achievement.

It takes a lot of individual will and sacrifice to reach that pinnacle said Mr. Garcia.

“It takes more than parent involvement,” he added. “Members have already made the decision to join the Boy Scouts because of the outdoor activities, and they also know that by sticking with it, they will learn how to lead.”

Ryan has served as a senior patrol leader and chapel’s aid. He’s in the National Junior Honor Society and plays on a local soccer team. He is also active in Order of the Arrow, the Boy Scouts honor society.

“I like being able to be a leader,” said Ryan, who aspires to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy and become a fighter pilot. “I want to be in the military when I grow up, and being in the scouts (has) similar (aspects) to the military. It helps with leadership skills and helps me learn life lessons, and I’ve learned a lot since I first joined.”

Ryan will now write a report about his project and submit it along with his application for Eagle Scout to the local council of the Boy Scouts of America for review. It will then be submitted to the national council for approval.

His report will include the things he learned, how it benefited the community, the number of volunteers and man-hours, and even the cost savings involved with the project.

Following that, he will appear before the Eagle Scout board of review. Once all requirements are met, Ryan should pin on Eagle Scout around June, Mr. Garcia said.

Ryan said he will stay active in Order of the Arrow and scouting. He plans to join the Venture program, a Boy Scouts of America youth development program for young men and women between ages 14 and 20.

For more information about joining the local scouting program, call Mr. Garcia at 768-3311 or Lt. Col. Merrill Armstrong at 298-3020.

For more details about scouting, visit <http://www.scouting.org>.

America Supports You: Girl Scouts Sell Cookies for Troops

By **Gerry J. Gilmore**
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – New York City-based Girl Scouts are marching across Gotham, selling boxes of their famed cookies earmarked for overseas troops.

The cookie-sales initiative, which began Nov. 11, is part of the Girl Scouts’ annual “Gift of Caring” community service project, noted Jennifer Rumbach, communications manager for the Girl Scout Council of Greater New York.

“A lot of people in New York City want to be able to give something to the troops and show their support,” Rumbach observed. And the scouts, she noted, “thought it would be a great idea to donate Girl Scout cookies to the troops.”

The Girl Scouts are working with several organizations, Rumbach said, to arrange cookie delivery to troops overseas.

“We’re hoping that most of them will go to Iraq and Kuwait,” she noted.

Rumbach estimated that between 10,000-15,000 Girl Scouts are selling cookies to New Yorkers. The scouts, she noted, have so far sold about 10,000



Courtesy photo

A Girl Scout tallies the boxes of cookies sold destined for U.S. troops serving overseas Nov. 11, 2004, at the Girl Scout Council of Greater New York’s Corporate Cookie Connection. More than 2,800 boxes were sold for U.S. troops during the one-day sale.

boxes earmarked for U.S. troops. The best-selling Girl Scout cookie, she said, is Thin Mint, followed by Samoa chocolate-cocoanut.

New Yorkers, Rumbach reported, “are very eager” to purchase Girl Scout cookies for the troops, priced at \$3.50 a box.

And, “the girls have just ‘gone wild’ over this project,” Rumbach noted. In fact, one scout canvassing potential customers in Queens, she said, has sold 300 boxes earmarked for troops.

Rumbach said the Girl Scouts had planned to sell 25,000 boxes of cookies for delivery to overseas service members.

But, “now we’re hoping to surpass that,” she remarked.

“I think that’s another reason that the girls feel very close to this project,” she explained, noting they have first-hand experience why U.S. troops are fighting terrorism overseas.

You don’t have to be a native New Yorker to participate in the cookie-sale initiative, Rumbach pointed out.

Call (212) 645-4000, extension 263, or visit <http://www.girlscoutsnyc.org/> for more information

The *XL*er



Photo by Airman 1st Class Olufemi Owolabi

*Capt. Paul Songy
47th Flying Training Wing
T-38 flight safety officer*

Hometown: Dallas
Family: Wife, Christy, Daughter, Brooklyn, 3 months
Time at Laughlin: One year and 6 months
Time in service: Ten years
Greatest accomplishment: Somehow raising a kid for 3 months
Hobbies: Playing guitar, cooking, sitting safety brick
Bad habit: Procrastination and indecision
Favorite movies: “Top Gun,” “Iron Eagle,” and “Firefox”
If you could spend one hour with any person, who would it be and why? My Daughter-- before she grows up and she’s asking for the keys to the car.

The military consumer and payday loan pitfalls

Quick cash may not be best fix when in a financial bind

By Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill
Public Affairs

There are times when people can find themselves in a financial pinch and seek ways to overcome the problem.

One quick fix some people look to is the convenience of payday loans, obtaining a small loan from a local lender and paying it off on their next payday.

Sounds easy and simple, but just because it's convenient and quick doesn't make it good, said Tech. Sgt. Anthony Williams, Laughlin's personal financial manager.

"We find that a lot of people go to payday lenders and figure they can get \$200 or \$300 and pay it off by their next pay day," said Sergeant Williams. "Then, something else comes up and they will let this money lapse over. So, now their \$300 loan becomes \$360 or \$380, depending on the interest rate."

And, if they let it lapse again, the problem can become more serious.

Sergeant Williams said he has read where people have borrowed a few hundred dollars and within months owe more than \$3,000 on pay day loans. And, when someone can't pay their loan off, the payment skyrockets due to the interest being compounded.

"They would have to get second and third jobs to pay the loans off," he said.

Payday loans are convenient because they are easily accessible on the Internet and in the local area, especially near military installations.

When it comes to personal financial obligations, everyone knows the Air Force demands its military members step up and take care of their financial responsibilities and that unit commanders enforce it if they don't. Air Force Instruction 36-2906 governs personal financial responsibility.

The lenders understand that too, and sometimes may continually harass the person for the payment or contact the military installation.

"Payday lenders know they will get their money," said Sergeant Williams. "Because if the military member doesn't pay, they will threaten to call their commander or first sergeant. The member will be obligated to pay the loan back at an outrageous interest rate."

If a military member fails to repay a just debt, a commander can refer the member to the Personal Financial Management Program manager for financial counseling, said Capt. Lynn Sylmar of the 47th Flying Training Wing judge advocate office.

"In addition, a commander may take appropriate administrative actions, including letters of counseling or reprimand, and Article 15," she said.

"If the member wrote a check for the loan and the check bounced, the member could even face disciplinary action under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice."

If an Air Force member gets in a bind with payday lenders, Sergeant Williams said to visit him for help. Although he is also the Air Force Aid officer here, he added that Air Force Aid can't help with financial problems such as payday loans

and credit card debt.

"I can help the member with a budget," he said. "We can look at their spending habits and cut back on certain things like recreation and other spending. Then, that money can go towards paying off the payday loan."

Sergeant Williams also said he would advise people with good credit to go to a banking institution and borrow the money to pay off the loan.

The financial manager highly encourages the use of the conventional banking system before looking for a quick fix to a financial problem.

"Payday loans get you money faster," he said, "but, in the long run, the interest rates and loan payments are much lower when using a conventional banking system. And, people will know

what their payments are, and can stretch their loan out for six months to a few years."

Sergeant Williams said that people can have peace of mind knowing they will not be harassed by pay day lenders, their interest won't compound each pay day, and that their loan can be paid off

in a convenient way such as an allotment.

For more information about personal financial management, or to make an appointment to create a budget or learn how to save and invest money, call Sergeant Williams at 298-5109.

Editor's note: *This is the first in a two-part series on personal financial management. See next week's Border Eagle article about the Personal Financial Management Program and what it provides for individuals and families.*



Financial fitness: Money management tips

The Personal Financial Management Program staff here offers the following tips to help people budget more efficiently and maintain good personal financial management:

Pay yourself first:

Make your savings a regular bill. Pay it first. Meet your other expenses with what's left.

Be flexible:

Be prepared to change your budget when needed. For example, plan what to do if your allowances or special pay changes.

Plan for big expenses:

For example, set aside a small amount for holiday gift giving each month. That way, you'll avoid overspending when the holidays arrive.

Consider using allotments:

An allotment is a part of your paycheck that you can have sent to a financial institution or to an individual. Allotments can ensure that some of your expenses are met even if you're away.

When making an allotment, be sure you ...
-Set it up early. It can take months to begin.
-Use the correct account number.
-Notify the finance office of any changes in address information.

-Verify that the finance office has started the allotment after the scheduled start date.

-Verify that the money is deposited before writing checks against it.

Don't forget to budget "fun" money:

You don't have to deny yourself every pleasure to manage your money well. Just be sure the spending is part of your plan.

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SUPT Class 05-06 awards

Daedalian award:
2nd Lt. Michael Elliott

Academic award, airlift/tanker track:
2nd Lt. Matthew Podkowka

Academic award, fighter/bomber track:
2nd Lt. Benjamin Jody

Flying training award, fighter/bomber track:
2nd Lt. Jay Talbert

Flying training award, airlift/tanker track:
Capt. John Harbour

Airlift/tanker Distinguished Graduate:
Capt. John Harbour
2nd Lt. Allan Maughan

Fighter/bomber Distinguished Graduate:
2nd Lt. Jay Talbert

Outstanding Officer of Class 05-06:
Capt. John Harbour

AETC Commander’s Trophy, airlift/tanker track:
Capt. John Harbour

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AETC Commander’s Trophy, fighter/bomber track:
2nd Lt. Jay Talbert

Outstanding 2nd Lieutenant Award:
2nd Lt. Michael Elliott

Citizenship award:
2nd Lt. Christopher Reid

First Term Airman Class Graduates:

n Airman 1st Class Jason Nelson, 47th 47th Operations Support Squadron
n Airman 1st Class DeAndre Miller, 47th Security Forces Squadron
n Airman 1st Class Allen

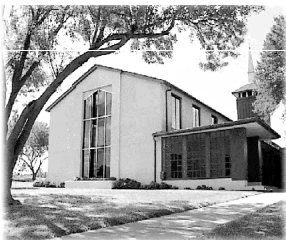
Fisk, 47th OSS
n Airman 1st Class Amanda Gawron, 47th OSS
n Airman 1st Class Shanequa Smith, 47th OSS
n Airman 1st Class Shawdale Ervin, 47th OSS
n Airman 1st Class Justin Meadows, 47th SFS
n Airman 1st Class Aaron Souza, 47th SFS
n Airman Meagan Peacock, 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron
n Airman Kelemwork Tariku-Shotts, 47th OSS
n Airman Anthony Nason, 47th OSS
n Airman Nicholas Powanda, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron

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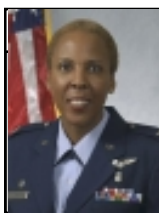
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Chapel Holy Week Schedule



Catholic:
Saturday: 1 Palm Sunday vigil Mass, 5 p.m.
Sunday: . 1 Passion (Palm) Sunday Mass, 9:30 a.m.
Thursday: 1 Holy Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
March 25: 1 Good Friday Liturgy, 6:30 p.m.
March 26: 1 Easter Vigil, 6:30 p.m.
March 27: 1 Easter Sunday, 9:30 a.m.
All serices celebrated at the chapel
Protestant
Sunday: Palm Sunday Services
1 Contemporary (Theater): 9 a.m
1 General Protestant (Chapel): 11 a.m.
March 25: 1 Good Friday Service (Chapel): Noon.
March 27: Easter Sunday Services
1 Easter Sunrise(Chapel lawn): 6:30-7 a.m.
1 Free breakfast (Chapel Narthex): 7 a.m.
1 Contemporary (Theater): 9 a.m
1 General Protestant (Chapel): 11 a.m.

2X5
Military Media



What's up Doc?

By Col. Laura Torres-Reyes
47th Medical Group
commander

Question: I was very sick with a dreadful cold for three weeks. Thought I could just get over it with rest and over-the-counter medications.

It would just not go away. So, during the second week, I called the clinic three consecutive mornings trying to get an appointment.

I kept being told no appointments today, try tomorrow. No available appointments until March. But I needed to see someone then since I was sick, and not a week later.

After the third try because I also have Blue Cross, which I just started my enrollment in January, I went downtown same day and received

medication.

Next day I was already starting to feel better. I have Tricare Prime.

I have heard other people complaining of the same problem recently of having to wait a week, two weeks to be seen when they are not feeling well.

Is there anything being planned to alleviate this situation?

Thanks for letting me vent my frustration.

Answer: I deeply apologize for the inconvenience and frustration you have experienced.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing serious problems with access due to our new computer software that we have had to install.

The program required a limited schedule of appointments in all of our clinics to accommodate 30 days of intense training for our staff.

This has continued to cause a significant daily backlog due to the ongoing learning curve required to enter all the data throughout the patient visit.

The good news is that based on

other AETC bases that have implemented this so far, we should expect being up and running full speed by May.

In the meantime, we are doing everything possible to find innovative ways to improve availability, and effectively manage patient requests to ensure the patients in the most need are given a priority.

The long term benefit is that this is the first phase in the Air Force's plan to have a totally paperless, electronic record system for the future.

Again, I am truly sorry for the inconvenience, and we greatly appreciate your patience during this challenging transition.

Thanks for your question!

You can contact our Family Care provider on call for advice and authorization for emergency care from 4:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. Monday through Friday, weekends, and holidays at 703-6199.

You may contact Colonel Torres-Reyes at laura.torres-reyes@laughlin.af.mil if you have a What's Up Doc? question.



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camps for
basketball,
softball and
shooting

Officials recommend changes to fitness test

By Tech. Sgt.
David Jablonski
Air Force Print News

Air Force health officials recommended seven changes to the fitness program during the program’s first annual review. This first assessment consists of reviews by three panels: functional, external and leadership, said Lt. Col. Sherry Sasser, chief of health promotions for the Air Force surgeon general. Air Force officials conducted the functional review

while experts from outside agencies and universities gave their opinion in an external review. The leadership review will begin in late April. Commanders and senior enlisted leaders will be randomly selected via e-mail to take a Web-based survey. The survey data will be compiled and forwarded to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper. One consistent aspect of the program, however, is that Airmen worldwide are embracing fitness as a way of life.

“We are seeing a change in the culture of the Air Force,” Colonel Sasser said. “Gyms are being used morning, noon and night and are packed. Units are running together. It’s wonderful to see.” In the interest of fostering the positive trend, officials said they are considering the following changes to improve the program. • Award full points on the body composition component of the test if the body mass index is within a healthy range. The Air Force is adding height and weight back

into the standard to accommodate Airmen unable to obtain the minimum abdominal circumference but are still at a normal weight for their height. National Institutes of Health officials define an index of less than 25 as a normal or healthy weight. • Move the waist-circumference measurement to a controlled area for people rated poor or marginal who are being retested to reduce inconsistencies. • Lengthen run times for tests conducted at higher elevations. • Retest Airmen who are rated “marginal” at 90 days instead of 180 days. • Promote nutrition as an important aspect of education and intervention. • Emphasize regular physical training rather than test

results. • Reinforce commanders’ accountability. A proposed change to weighing the programs components at 60-20-10-10 instead of the current 50-30-10-10 was rejected. The weighted areas, expressed in percentages, correspond to the run, waist measurement, crunches and pushups. Two smaller changes will be made to the assessment criteria. Values for females aged 50 to 54 were not consistent with all other age categories, so officials will adjust the criteria according to American College of Sports Medicine standards. A category was also added for people older than 60. The program changes are expected to be implemented in June, officials said.

Tips for increasing daily activities

Texas governor, Rick Perry, is urging all Texans to incorporate physical activity and healthy choices into their daily lives. This mirrors the continued push for Airmen to be “fit to fight.” The governor’s office the following tips to help individuals increase physical activity in their daily lives.

Ways to increase daily activity:

- n Spend less time in your vehicle. The average Texas driver spends about 347 hours a year or 14 days in their car.
- n Park your car where the big spaces are...at the back of the parking lot.
- n Walk around the block while your kids ride their bikes or skate ahead of you. Catch up to them occasionally.
- n Wake up at work with a brisk walk down the stairs or around the block, not another pit stop at the coffee pot.
- n Ditch the remote. Change channels the old fashioned way.
- n Get outside and dig your fingers into the earth! Plant a

garden and maintain it.

- n Sweep the driveway and patio every other day.
- n Get a push-mower instead of a riding mower.

What just 30 minutes of activity can do for you:

- n Gardening = 173 calories burned
- n Beach volleyball = 370 calories burned
- n Texas two-step = 115 calories burned
- n Backyard football = 307 calories burned
- n Grocery shopping = 134 calories burned

Benefits of increased activity:

- n Improve stamina and energy.

- n Control body weight.
- n Reduce risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and osteoporosis.
- n Reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety and experience better mental well-being.
- n Build and maintain healthy muscles, bones and joints.

For further information, visit the following websites:

- n www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner/index.html
- n www.tdh.state.tx.us
- n www.verbnow.com
- n www.online-health-fitness.com/bmicalculator.html
- n www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/press/initiatives/fitness
- n www.active.com

